Application 5: Differentiation Instruction in the Classroom

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Differentiation Instruction in the Classroom

Introduction

Differentiation instruction in the classroom is not a new concern. There has been a need to differentiate instruction, assignments, and environment since the first classroom. By differentiating the classroom to suit the needs of all students, we ensure that learning takes place for each and every student not matter the readiness level. Bray, Brown, and Green (2004) state that “differentiated instruction differs from individualized instruction in that it provides learners with more options for learning while ensuring that the classroom workload remains manageable” (p. 54). To differentiate the classroom, you may change several items concerning the students, such as content, process, product, affect, and learning environment. By also incorporating technology you vastly improve the amount of learning taking place.

Using Technology to Differentiate

One simple use of technology for students would be one that is already incorporated into my classroom and that would be the Tween Tribune.

**Tween Tribune** (<http://tweentribune.com/>)

This online newspaper for junior high aged students gives students current news about items that they would be interested in. As an English teacher, this website gets my students reading and excited about sharing interesting news articles that they have found. Along with reading, students may also comment on articles or other comments left by students. Of course, the teacher must approve all comments first before they are published. The website itself offers ways to use their content to fit into your classroom. I have graded students on their spelling, grammar, and punctuation. I have also used other students’ comments as a way to show students how not to write. As this takes place over the internet, students feel as though they are doing more than just reading, which they are! They are truly contributing their opinions to a public medium. Students are not relegated to reading just one story that all must read. They can choose to read topics that interest them. Tween Tribune offers students a list of topics they may choose from that will bring to their screen articles on the topic they wish to read about.

**Kindles** (<http://www.amazon.com/Kindle-Wireless-Reader-Wifi-Graphite/dp/B002Y27P3M/ref=amb_link_354440742_2?pf_rd_m=ATVPDKIKX0DER&pf_rd_s=center-1&pf_rd_r=1FAEMN6SXS2VNCSGC73B&pf_rd_t=101&pf_rd_p=1282782162&pf_rd_i=507846>)

Kindles or e-readers are something I have been wanting to incorporate into my classroom for some time now. Funding, however, is a major issue especially as I would like a classroom set. Using Kindles would almost serve the same purpose of the online newspaper. Kindles would provide students access to thousands of books more readily that our school library. Also, as I discussed with our technology facilitator, Kindles would provide anonymity to those students who were low readers. Many students do not choose books appropriate for their reading level because they do not wish to be made fun of or stand out. Book covers and jackets allow others to see what material is being read. Using Kindles would allow students to choose suitable books without being set apart from the class. Kindles also allow some material to be heard audibly, allowing low readers the ability to improve comprehension. Also, students can increase font/text size to enhance readability. Boreman and Lowe (2010) stated “ Literacy advisers for U-CAN READ find Kindles give reluctant readers choice, new reading experiences that motivate them to engage with texts and consequently, contribute to their reading success” (p. 3).

Conclusion

These are only a few of the technologies that all teachers could easily incorporate into any classroom. Both allow students to individualize their learning while not increasing their workload. This allows for student options and gives them a sense of control with their learning.

References

Bormann, F., & Lowe, K. (2010). *Rekindling the fire: Using kindles for literacy in the classroom. Literacy Learning: The middle years*, 18(3), 39. Retrieved from Education Research Complete database.

Bray, M., Brown, A., & Green, T. (2004). *Technology and the diverse learner: A guide to classroom practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Walden University M.S. in Education Program

Formative Evaluative Criteria for Applications and Reflective Essays

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Quality of Work Submitted**  ***Work reflects graduate-level critical, analytical thinking.*** | **A: Exemplary Work** A = 4.00; A- = 3.75 ***All of the previous, in addition to the following:*** | **B: Graduate Level Work**  **B+ = 3.50; B = 3.00;**  **B- = 2.75**  ***All of the previous, in addition to the following:*** | **C: Minimal Work**  **C+ = 2.50; C = 2.00;**  **C- = 1.75** | **F: Work Submitted but Unacceptable** F = 1.00 |
| ***Adherence to Assignment Expectations***  *The extent to which work meets the assigned criteria.* | Assignment exceeds expectations,  integrating additional material and/or information.  Assignment demonstrates exceptional breadth and depth. | All parts of the assignment are completed, with fully developed topics.  The work is presented in a thorough and detailed manner.  Assignment demonstrates appropriate breadth and depth. | Most parts of assignment are completed.  Topics are not fully developed.  Assignment demonstrates minimal depth and breadth. | Does not fulfill the expectations of the assignment.  Key components are not included  Assignment lacks breadth and depth. |
| ***Assimilation and Synthesis of Ideas***  The extent to which the work reflects the student’s ability to-   1. Understand the assignment’s purpose; 2. Understand and analyze material in videos, readings, and   discussions;   1. *Apply presented strategies*   ***\*\*****May include, but are not limited to, scholarly articles, collegial discussions; information from conferences, in service, faculty development, and/or meetings. Outside sources also may include materials from previous Walden MSED courses, videos, and readings. (but aren’t currently being used in this course) In addition, students may refer to the course Webliography, course reference list (Bibliography), and the theoretical foundations, all of which are located in the eCollege course page.* | Demonstrates the ability intellectually to explore and/or implement key instructional concepts.  Demonstrates exceptional inclusion of major points, using creditable sources\*\*, in addition to course videos or required readings.  Demonstrates insightful reflection and/or critical thinking. | Demonstrates a clear understanding of the assignment’s purpose.  Includes specific information from course videos or required readings to support major points.  Provides careful consideration of key instructional concepts. | Shows some degree of understanding of the assignment’s purpose.  Generally applies theories, concepts, and/or strategies correctly, with ideas unclear and/or underdeveloped  Minimally includes specific information from course videos or required readings. | Shows a lack of understanding of the assignment’s purpose.    Does not apply theories, concepts, and/or strategies  Does not include specific information from course videos or required readings. |
| ***Written Expression and Formatting***  *The extent to which scholarly, critical, analytical writing is presented in APA format;*  *Standard Edited English ( i.e. correct grammar, mechanics).* | Represents scholarly writing in a correct APA format.  Work is unified around a central purpose with well-developed ideas, logically organized in paragraph structure with clear transitions.  Effective sentence variety; clear, concise, and powerful expression are evident.  Work is written in Standard Edited English. No prominent errors interfere with reading. | Work is well organized with correct APA formatting throughout.  Ideas are clearly and concisely expressed.  Elements of effective communication such as an introduction and conclusion are included.  Work is written in Standard Edited English with few, if any, grammatical or mechanical errors | Somewhat represents mature, scholarly, graduate-level writing, with APA generally followed.  Ideas are not clearly and concisely expressed.  Elements of effective communication such as an introduction and conclusion are not included.  Work contains more than a few grammatical, or mechanical errors. | The quality of writing and/or APA formatting are not acceptable for graduate level work.  Major points do not reflect appropriate elements of communication.  No effort to express ideas clearly and concisely.  Work is not written in Standard Edited English. Contains many grammatical or mechanical errors |
|  | **A: Exemplary Work** A = 4.00; A- = 3.75 ***All of the previous, in addition to the following:*** | **B: Graduate Level Work**  **B+ = 3.50; B = 3.00;**  **B- = 2.75**  ***All of the previous, in addition to the following:*** | **C: Minimal Work**  **C+ = 2.50; C = 2.00;**  **C- = 1.75** | **F: Work Submitted but Unacceptable** F = 1.00 |

It is expected that all applications and reflective essays will be submitted according to the assignment due dates indicated. Exceptions may be made

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By Valerie Gerdes

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